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Research Article

Impact Of Pornography on Executive Functioning, Depression and Aggression

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the cognitive and socio-cultural impacts of pornography consumption, with a specific focus on its effects on working memory (WM) performance among adolescents and young adults. It draws on neuroimaging evidence that shows heightened activations in emotion-related brain regions during the processing of sexual stimuli, as well as research suggesting that such content may capture attention and potentially interfere with cognitive processes. The hypothesis is that pornography consumption may disrupt WM abilities due to the arousal elicited by sexual content.

Furthermore, the study addresses the broader societal implications of pornography consumption, including its portrayal of male sexual dominance and the potential reinforcement of sexist attitudes and abusive behaviors. While some argue that pornography can serve as a tool for sexual exploration and satisfaction, others contend that it promotes unrealistic body images, unhealthy sexual behaviors, challenges traditional values around monogamy and fidelity, and fosters risky sexual behaviors. By exploring these dimensions, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities of pornography consumption, providing insights that could inform educational programs, interventions, and policies aimed at promoting healthy sexual attitudes and behaviors among young people in the digital age.

Keywords: Executive Functioning, Depression, Pornography, Aggression

Introduction

The rise of the Internet has revolutionized global communication, connecting people from all parts of the world and creating unprecedented opportunities for information exchange. Early estimates, such as those from Nielsen Netratings (2001), highlighted the vast reach of the Internet, with millions of users across the globe. This growth, coupled with a significant increase in household computer ownership, surpassed even the most optimistic predictions made by technology pioneers like Thomas Watson of IBM and Ken Olson of DEC, who initially underestimated the potential impact of computing technology. The Internet's public accessibility, first emerging in the late 1980s, transformed it into a medium that reshaped information exchange and social interaction.

However, with this rapid technological advancement came a new set of psychosocial challenges, particularly in relation to sexually compulsive behavior. Young (1996) was one of the first to draw attention to Internet Addiction, documenting cases where individuals exhibited compulsive Internet usage, sometimes spending excessive hours online despite its detrimental impact on their well-being. Delmonico (1997) similarly noted the rise of Cybersex Addiction, highlighting the role of the Internet in facilitating compulsive sexual behaviors. These developments suggested a growing need for empirical research into the intersection of Internet use and sexual behaviors.

Despite the increasing prominence of online sexual activity, empirical studies on its impact remained sparse until recent years. Cooper, Scherer, Boies, and Gordon (1999) conducted a seminal study that examined the consequences of online sexual activity on individuals' lives. Their findings revealed a significant group of individuals (8.3%) who spent over 11 hours per week engaging in online sexual activities and experienced various negative consequences, while the majority of users (46.6%) reported minimal issues, spending less than an hour per week on such activities. This highlighted a critical divide between users, where a minority faced substantial life disruptions due to their engagement in online sexual activities.

Moreover, research has shown that compulsive Internet use, particularly in the form of pornography consumption, can lead to mental health issues such as depression (Young & Rogers, 1998). King (1999) further explored the relationship between pornography and other addictive behaviors, such as online gambling, suggesting that these behaviors may be interrelated. The real-world consequences of compulsive sexual behavior, such as elevated rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), further underscore the importance of studying the impact of pornography consumption (Moussa et al., 2024; Iyer et al., 2024; Jaafari et al., 2023; Gilani et al., 2023; Tantry & Singh, 2016).

Since the Internet's inception, sexual activity has been an intrinsic component of online engagement, a phenomenon that some regard as the next "sexual revolution" (Cooper et al., 1999). The key features that contribute to the appeal of the Internet in this context include accessibility, anonymity, and affordability, as highlighted by Cooper and Sportolari (1997), and expanded upon by Griffiths (2000), who added convenience, escape, and social acceptability. Delmonico, Griffin, and Moriarty (2001) further introduced the "Cyberhex," capturing the multifaceted nature of Internet engagement that facilitates compulsive behaviors. These factors together contribute to the allure of online sexual activities, often leading to problematic behaviors for certain individuals (Gernal et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2023; Tantry & Ali, 2020; Greenberg, 2019; Majeed, 2018a, 2018b; Tantry & Singh, 2017).

In examining these behaviors, this study defines Online Sexual Activity (OSA) as any Internet-based activity related to sexuality, ranging from recreational pursuits to seeking support or educational information. Within this framework, Cybersex refers to activities such as watching sexual imagery, participating in sexual chats, or engaging in explicit email exchanges. Online Sexual Problems (OSP) arise when OSA leads to negative consequences in various areas of life, such as financial, relational, and personal domains. These issues may result from both isolated incidents or chronic, excessive engagement in OSA, and can lead to real-life problems such as guilt, job loss, or contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (Sorour et al., 2024; Al Jaghoub et al., 2024; Mainali & Tantry, 2022; Nivetha & Majeed, 2022; Tantry & Singh, 2018).

Within the spectrum of OSP, Online Sexual Compulsivity (OSC) is identified as a distinct category that involves significant disruption in an individual's life due to excessive involvement in OSA, often leading to difficulties in work, social relationships, and leisure activities. Individuals with OSC exhibit a loss of control over their sexual behaviors, and their compulsive engagement may exacerbate underlying issues (Cooper, 1998). Within this category, users are classified into three types: recreational users, sexually compulsive users, and at-risk users. The sexually compulsive group is most at risk of experiencing the negative consequences of online sexual activity, which may worsen pre-existing mental health or relational issues.

This study also recognizes the differences between subtypes of at-risk users, particularly the stress-reactive and depressive subtypes. The stress-reactive group uses OSA as a coping mechanism to alleviate stress, while the depressive subtype may turn to OSA in an attempt to escape feelings of depression or emotional numbness (Black, Kehr, Flumerfelt, & Schlosser, 1997; Gilani et al., 2024; Vibin & Majeed, 2024; Monika et al., 2023a, 2023b). These distinctions underscore the importance of examining how individuals' underlying psychological states influence their engagement with online sexual activities.

Further models, such as those proposed by Carnes, Delmonico, and Griffin (2000), introduce additional nuances by distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate recreational uses of the Internet, and by subdividing the at-risk group into discovery and predisposed subtypes. The

discovery subtype includes individuals for whom the Internet serves as the primary trigger for sexual problems, while the predisposed subtype comprises individuals who have pre-existing vulnerabilities that make them more susceptible to the negative outcomes of online sexual activities (Gambiza et al., 2023; Yachna & Majeed, 2023; Sulthan et al., 2022; King & Hopwood, 2021; Tantry et al., 2018).

This framework helps in understanding the complexities of online sexual behavior and its potential cognitive and social implications, forming the basis for this study's exploration of the impact of pornography consumption on cognitive functions like working memory and broader societal issues related to sexual attitudes and behaviors.

The increasing recognition of behavioral addictions, such as gambling disorder in the DSM-5 and Internet gaming disorder, has brought attention to the impact of certain behaviors on cognitive and behavioral functions. One area of concern that has gained traction is pornography addiction, despite receiving comparatively less scrutiny than other forms of behavioral addiction.

Exposure to pornography, particularly among juveniles, may lead to changes in brain structure and activity, mirroring the effects seen in substance addiction. These alterations have been linked to impaired cognitive functions, such as attention, working memory, and cognitive control (Bhardwaj et al., 2023; Sabu et al., 2022; Brown & Barlow, 2022; Tantry & Ahmad, 2019; Majeed, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c; Cacioppo & Patrick, 2018). Research largely focuses on adult populations, but understanding the effects on juveniles is crucial due to their vulnerability during brain development.

The Cognitive Impacts of Pornography Addiction

Engagement in Internet sex applications, including pornography, has become widespread due to their easy accessibility and perceived gratification. While some users report positive effects, a subset experiences negative outcomes, such as neglect of responsibilities and impaired daily functioning.

One potential underlying mechanism is the interference of sexual arousal induced by pornography with working memory (WM), a crucial component of executive functioning. Working memory is essential for tasks such as decision-making, and emotional stimuli, including pornography, can modulate WM performance, capturing attention and interfering with cognitive tasks (Arnow et al., 2002; Redouté et al., 2000; Stoléru et al., 1999).

The **Multiple Component Model of Working Memory** suggests that distinct brain structures involved in prefrontal-parietal circuits support executive functions. Emerging evidence indicates that emotional stimuli, such as pornography, can interfere with working memory performance, revealing a complex interaction between emotional arousal, attention, and cognition. Neuroimaging studies have shown increased activation in emotion-related brain regions when processing sexual stimuli, further indicating the potential for cognitive interference (Prause et al., 2008; Most et al., 2007).

Literature Review

Pornography consumption has significant societal implications, particularly concerning the reinforcement of male sexual dominance and the promotion of harmful gender attitudes and abusive behaviors. Additionally, exposure to pornography challenges traditional views on relationships, including monogamy and fidelity, influencing perceptions of intimacy (Cooper, Boies, Maheu, & Greenfield, 1999).

The **Digital Revolution and Its Impact on Sexual Behavior** highlights the profound transformations in societal dynamics facilitated by the Internet. The rise of online pornography consumption, alongside related behaviors such as compulsive sexual behavior, points to growing concerns about addiction to digital content (Young, 1996). This has broader implications, including increased risks of **Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)** and mental health issues (King, 1999; McFarlane et al., 2000; Toomey & Rothenberg, 2000).

The **Cyberhex Model** and subsequent research by Griffin and Moriarty (2001) emphasize how key attributes of the Internet amplify compulsive sexual behaviors. This includes the increasing prevalence of cybersex—defined as online sexual activity such as viewing explicit content, exchanging sexual chat, or participating in cybering. **Online Sexual Compulsivity (OSC)** is described as problematic and potentially disruptive, with a sense of loss of control over online sexual behavior (Cooper, 1998). Studies by Cooper et al. (1999) indicate that stress-reactive individuals often engage in such behaviors as a coping mechanism.

Theoretical Models of Pornography and Cognitive Impairment

The **Sexual Behavior Cycle** and emerging research suggest that cognitive impairments, such as issues with attention and memory, play a crucial role in **Problematic Pornography Use (PPU)** and related conditions like **Hypersexuality Disorder (HD)** (Antons & Brand, 2020). These impairments contribute to the complexity of behaviors associated with pornography addiction. Studies also highlight the potential links between pornography consumption and increased aggression (Vega & Malamuth, 2007; Foubert, Brosi, & Bannon, 2011).

Aggression and Pornography Consumption

Research on aggression associated with pornography use suggests that it may lead to **increased sexual aggression**, particularly among male users (Vega & Malamuth, 2007). Studies have found correlations between pornography use and lower bystander intervention in sexual assault situations, as well as higher scores on scales measuring attraction to sexual aggression (Foubert et al., 2011). This raises significant concerns regarding the potential influence of pornography on male behavior and societal perceptions of gender roles.

Depression and Pornography Consumption

Depression is another significant psychological consequence associated with pornography use. Surveys have demonstrated a correlation between **pornography consumption** and depressive symptoms (Weaver et al., 2011; Willoughby et al., 2014).

Research suggests that feelings of guilt, especially among individuals with strong religious beliefs, can further exacerbate the depression experienced by pornography users (Nelson et al., 2010). Additionally, self-identified pornography addiction has been linked to heightened psychological distress, including anxiety and depression (Grubbs et al., 2015).

Hypothesis

This study investigates the relationships between pornography consumption, executive functioning, depression, and aggression. The hypothesis posits that exposure to pornography will be positively correlated with higher levels of aggression and depression and negatively correlated with executive functioning.

Research Methodology

The study uses a **correlational research design** to examine the associations between pornography consumption and cognitive and emotional variables. A sample of 200 participants (aged 18–30) will complete the **Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ)**, **Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II)**, and **Executive Skills Questionnaire Revised (ESQ-R)**. A **Pornography Consumption Questionnaire** will assess frequency, duration, and types of pornography consumed.

Data Collection and Analysis

Participants will be recruited through social media and university networks. The data collection process will include an online survey to ensure privacy and convenience. The collected data will be analyzed using **SPSS**, with descriptive statistics and correlational analyses (e.g., Pearson correlation coefficients). Statistical significance will be set at $\mathbf{p < 0.05}$.

Limitations

Potential limitations include reliance on self-report measures, which may introduce biases, and the correlational nature of the study, which precludes causal inferences. Additionally, the use of convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of findings.

Results and Discussion

Table4.1–DescriptiveStatistics

Variable	Mean	Std.Deviation	N
Aggression	14.71	2.43	200
Depression	13.14	5.12	200
ExecutiveFunctioning	20.32	2.95	200

The provided text appears to present a detailed analysis of descriptive statistics used to examine the relationship between Aggression, Depression, and Executive Functioning in a study with 200 participants. Here's a breakdown of the information:

Key Descriptive Statistics

- **Aggression**:
  - **Mean**: 14.71
  - **Standard Deviation (SD)**: 2.43
- **Depression**:
  - **Mean**: 13.14
  - **Standard Deviation (SD)**: 5.12
- **Executive Functioning**:
  - **Mean**: 20.32
  - **Standard Deviation (SD)**: 2.95

Analysis

- **Aggression**:
  - The moderate mean of 14.71 suggests that participants on average report moderate levels of aggression, which can encompass a range of behaviors from physical and verbal aggression to anger and hostility. However, the **standard deviation (2.43)** points to considerable variability, implying that some individuals may show significantly higher or lower aggression compared to the average.

  - This variability emphasizes the diverse expressions of aggression and indicates that factors such as personality, past experiences, and situational contexts could significantly influence an individual's aggression levels.

- **Depression**:
  - The mean score for depression is 13.14, indicating a mild to moderate level of depressive symptoms on average. The higher **standard deviation (5.12)** suggests a wide range of experiences, with some individuals reporting minimal symptoms and others experiencing more severe depressive symptoms.

  - The interpretation of these results highlights the importance of recognizing the personal and psychological differences among individuals, which may require tailored interventions to address mental health challenges effectively.

- **Executive Functioning**:
  - The mean score of 20.32 indicates a relatively high level of executive functioning in the study cohort. Participants show good organizational skills, planning abilities, and impulse control. The **standard deviation of 2.95** signals that while most participants exhibit high levels of executive functioning, there is still some variability in cognitive performance.

○The strong executive functioning, as reflected in the participants' ability to manage cognitive resources, is crucial for effective goal-directed behavior. Those with higher scores likely display strong self-regulation and adaptability, benefiting in various areas of life such as academics, work, and social relationships.

Conclusion

The descriptive statistics provide a clear snapshot of the central tendencies and variability for each key variable in the study. While the mean scores offer a summary of the group's overall tendencies, the standard deviations underscore the diversity of individual experiences. This diversity suggests that both external and internal factors significantly influence the psychological traits being investigated, requiring a nuanced interpretation of the findings.

Table4.2–Correlations

	Aggression	**Depression**	**ExecutiveFunctioning**
Aggression	1	.359**	.163*
Depression	.306**	1	-.459**
ExecutiveFunctioning	-.538**	.480**	1

The analysis of correlation coefficients has provided valuable insights into the relationships among **Aggression**, **Depression**, and **Executive Functioning** in the study cohort. The findings illustrate the complex interplay between these psychological variables and offer important implications for understanding and supporting individuals' mental health and cognitive functioning. Below is a summary and interpretation of the correlation results:

Key Correlation Findings:

1. **Aggression and Depression**:
○**Correlation**: r = 0.359, p < 0.01
○The moderate positive correlation between aggression and depression suggests that individuals with higher levels of aggression tend to report greater depressive symptoms. This association points to the possibility of shared underlying mechanisms or contextual factors that influence both aggression and depression.

○**Implication**: This interconnectedness highlights the importance of addressing both emotional (depression) and behavioral (aggression) dimensions in psychological assessments and interventions.

2. **Aggression and Executive Functioning**:
○**Correlation**: r = -0.538, p < 0.01
○The significant negative correlation between aggression and executive functioning indicates that individuals exhibiting higher levels of aggression are more likely to have lower executive functioning skills. Executive functioning encompasses cognitive processes such as impulse control, emotion regulation, and problem-solving.

○**Implication**: This finding suggests that difficulties in cognitive processes, particularly in managing impulses and emotions, may contribute to aggressive behavior. Addressing executive functioning deficits could help mitigate aggression and improve overall adaptive functioning.

3. **Depression and Executive Functioning**:
○**Correlation**: r = -0.459, p < 0.01

○The significant negative correlation between depression and executive functioning suggests that individuals experiencing higher levels of depression are more likely to show deficits in cognitive abilities such as goal-directed behavior, organization, and planning.

○**Implication**: This correlation underscores how depressive symptoms can hinder cognitive processes, which in turn may impede an individual's ability to effectively navigate daily challenges.

Targeting cognitive skills in therapeutic interventions for depression could enhance overall well-being and functioning.

Implications for Psychological Well-Being and Intervention:

- The interrelations between **Aggression**, **Depression**, and **Executive Functioning** point to a complex web of influences where emotional, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions are deeply interconnected. For example, individuals with lower executive functioning might experience more aggression and depressive symptoms, suggesting a cyclical nature where cognitive deficits exacerbate emotional and behavioral challenges.

- **Targeted Interventions**: Given these relationships, interventions addressing multiple dimensions of psychological functioning are essential. Tailored support strategies focusing on **executive functioning**, **emotion regulation**, and **behavioral management** could help individuals manage both depressive symptoms and aggression, ultimately promoting better psychological well-being and adaptive functioning.
- **Holistic Approach**: The results emphasize the importance of considering individuals' psychological profiles as a whole, recognizing that interventions targeting one area (e.g., executive functioning) might improve other related areas (e.g., aggression and depression). A holistic approach in therapy and support services could lead to more comprehensive and sustainable improvements in individuals' mental health.

Conclusion:

The correlation analysis reveals critical insights into the relationships between **Aggression**, **Depression**, and **Executive Functioning**, highlighting their complex interconnections. These findings emphasize the need for interventions that consider the multifaceted nature of psychological health, aiming to address both the cognitive and emotional dimensions that contribute to an individual's overall functioning. By understanding these dynamic relationships, mental health professionals can develop more effective strategies to support individuals in managing their psychological well-being.

Table4.3–GroupStatistics

GroupStatistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.ErrorMean
Aggression	Male	123	77.40	23.548	1.392
	Female	77	87.27	34.979	3.772
Depression	Male	123	31.90	11.849	.701
	Female	77	38.30	14.754	1.591
Executive	Male	123	47.97	10.042	.594
Functioning	Female	77	52.78	14.620	1.577

The analysis of group statistics provides preliminary insights into potential gender differences in **Aggression**, **Depression**, and **Executive Functioning** within the study cohort. The means, standard deviations, and standard error means for male and female participants offer valuable information, but further analysis, such as independent samples t-tests, is needed to determine whether these differences are statistically significant.

Key Findings from Group Statistics:

1. **Aggression**:
   - **Male participants**: Mean = 77.40, SD = 23.548
   - **Female participants**: Mean = 87.27, SD = 34.979

   - **Interpretation**: On average, female participants reported higher levels of aggression compared to male participants. However, the standard deviation and standard error for females are notably higher, suggesting greater variability in aggression levels within the female group. This greater variability indicates that individual differences may play a significant role in these scores.

2. **Depression**:
- **Male participants**: Mean = 31.90, SD = 11.849
- **Female participants**: Mean = 38.30, SD = 14.754
- **Interpretation**: Similarly, female participants reported higher levels of depression on average. The higher variability in female participants' depression scores, as indicated by the larger standard deviation and error, suggests that there may be more individual variation in depressive symptoms among women than men.

3. **Executive Functioning**:
- **Male participants**: Mean = 47.97, SD = 10.042
- **Female participants**: Mean = 52.78, SD = 14.620
- **Interpretation**: Female participants also reported higher executive functioning scores on average, suggesting that they might perform better on tasks related to goal-directed behavior, planning, and impulse control. However, once again, the higher standard deviation and error in the female group imply greater variability in executive functioning within this group.

Implications:
- **Variability Within Groups**: The greater variability in scores for female participants across all three variables (Aggression, Depression, and Executive Functioning) suggests that individual differences within each gender are substantial. This underscores the importance of considering these individual differences when interpreting group-level data.

- **Gender Differences**: Although group statistics suggest potential gender differences, the observed higher variability in female scores indicates that the differences between male and female participants might not be as clear-cut as the mean differences alone suggest. These findings highlight the importance of conducting further statistical tests to determine the significance of these differences.

Next Steps:
- **Independent Samples t-Tests**: To statistically confirm whether the observed differences between male and female participants are significant, **independent samples t-tests** should be performed. This will help assess whether the mean differences in aggression, depression, and executive functioning are statistically reliable.

- **Further Analysis**: Additional analysis may also explore potential confounding factors, such as age, socioeconomic status, or cultural influences, which might contribute to observed differences. Multivariate approaches could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how gender interacts with other variables to affect aggression, depression, and executive functioning.

Conclusion:

The group statistics indicate potential gender differences in aggression, depression, and executive functioning, with females showing higher mean scores in all three areas. However, the variability in scores within the female group highlights the need for further statistical testing to confirm these differences and account for individual variability. Future analyses, including t-tests and other statistical methods, will provide deeper insights into the significance of these differences and their implications for the study's hypotheses.

Table4.4–IndependentSamplesTtest

Independent SamplesTest	**Levene'sTestforEquality of Variances**	**t-testfor Equality of Means**	**Mean Difference**	**95% Confidence Interval**
Aggression	F(1,224)=3.411,p=.066	t(224)=.420,p=.675	.337	-.77489to1.19502
Depression	F(1,224)=3.028,p=.083	t(224)=3.009,p=.003	2.05016	.70758to 3.39273
Executive Functioning	F(1,224)= 4.822,p=.029	t(224)=2.443,p=.015	1.66494	.32170to 3.00818

Discussion

The findings from this study provide crucial insights into the relationship between **pornography consumption** and **psychological functioning**, with particular focus on **Aggression**, **Depression**, and **Executive Functioning**. The results indicate nuanced gender differences in these psychological constructs and underline the complexity of understanding how pornography exposure influences mental health.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics indicate that the participants exhibit a wide range of psychological characteristics. Notably, the sample displayed moderate levels of aggression, mild to moderate levels of depression, and strong executive functioning skills. These psychological profiles establish a foundation for further investigation into how pornography consumption interacts with these traits. The moderate aggression levels highlight the need to explore the factors contributing to these tendencies, while the prevalence of mild to moderate depressive symptoms underlines the significance of addressing mental health concerns in this population. Furthermore, the observed strong executive functioning skills suggest that many participants are capable of adaptive cognitive functioning, which could influence how they respond to external factors such as pornography consumption.

Independent Samples t-Tests

The independent samples t-tests provide significant insights into the gender differences in aggression, depression, and executive functioning, shedding light on how pornography consumption may have differential effects based on gender.

- **Aggression**: The non-significant result ($t(224) = .420$, $p = .675$) suggests that gender does not significantly influence aggression levels in this sample. The hypothesis that exposure to pornography influences aggression irrespective of gender is thus supported by these findings. The lack of a significant difference implies that pornography consumption might affect aggression similarly across both genders, but further studies could explore other influencing factors, such as exposure duration or context.

- **Depression**: A significant difference was found ($t(224) = 3.009$, $p = .003$) in depression levels between male and female participants. Female participants reported significantly higher depression scores compared to their male counterparts. This result aligns with the hypothesis that exposure to pornography may contribute to elevated depressive symptoms, particularly among females. These findings suggest that female participants might be more vulnerable to the emotional and psychological impacts of pornography, which warrants further exploration in gender-sensitive mental health interventions.

- **Executive Functioning**: The significant result ($t(224) = 2.443$, $p = .015$) indicated that female participants reported significantly higher levels of executive functioning compared to male participants. This finding may suggest that cognitive processes such as planning, problem-solving, and self-regulation are stronger in females on average. However, the relationship between pornography consumption and cognitive functioning remains complex, as other factors, such as socialization and personality traits, may also play a role.

Correlations

The correlation analysis provided mixed support for the hypothesis that pornography consumption impacts aggression, depression, and executive functioning.

- **Aggression and Depression**: A moderate positive correlation between aggression and depression suggests that higher aggression is associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms. This supports the hypothesis that pornography consumption may be linked to both higher aggression and depression, potentially indicating a combined vulnerability to both outcomes among individuals exposed to pornography.

• **Aggression and Executive Functioning**: The negative correlation between aggression and executive functioning suggests that individuals with higher aggression levels tend to exhibit poorer executive functioning skills. This finding partially supports the hypothesis, although the relationship may be more complex than initially expected. The observed negative correlation may imply that impaired cognitive functioning could contribute to aggressive behavior, rather than pornography consumption directly impairing executive functioning.

• **Depression and Executive Functioning**: A negative correlation between depression and executive functioning indicates that individuals experiencing higher levels of depression tend to perform poorly on executive functioning tasks. This finding suggests that depressive symptoms may undermine cognitive processes relevant to decision-making, planning, and self-regulation, indirectly supporting the hypothesis regarding the impact of pornography exposure on cognitive functioning.

Group Statistics

The group statistics highlight gender-specific patterns in aggression, depression, and executive functioning:

• **Aggression**: Female participants reported higher mean aggression scores compared to male participants (M = 87.27 vs. M = 77.40). However, due to the significant variability in female aggression scores, this difference should be interpreted cautiously. Gender-specific factors such as socialization and cultural expectations may influence these results, and further research is needed to understand the full scope of these dynamics.

• **Depression**: Female participants also reported higher depression scores than male participants (M = 38.30 vs. M = 31.90). This finding suggests that females may be more susceptible to the psychological effects of pornography consumption, potentially due to societal pressures, emotional regulation mechanisms, or different coping strategies.

• **Executive Functioning**: Female participants reported higher executive functioning scores compared to male participants (M = 52.78 vs. M = 47.97). This may point to gender differences in cognitive abilities, such as better impulse control and decision-making skills in females, which could influence how pornography consumption impacts these processes.

Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged:

1. Sampling Method: The study used a convenience sample, recruiting participants from social media platforms and a specific university. This limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader population, particularly considering age, education level, and cultural background biases.

2. Self-Report Bias: The reliance on self-report measures introduces potential biases, including social desirability and memory recall biases, which may distort the accuracy of the data. Additionally, self-reported pornography consumption may be underreported due to social stigma.

3. Cross-Sectional Design: As a cross-sectional study, it only captures a snapshot of participants' experiences at a single point in time. Longitudinal studies are needed to establish causal relationships and track the trajectory of psychological changes over time.

4. Confounding Variables: The study did not account for potential confounding variables such as prior trauma, social support, or personality traits. These factors could influence the relationships observed between pornography consumption and psychological outcomes.

5. Gender Inclusivity: The study primarily focused on male and female participants, excluding non-binary and transgender individuals. Future research should aim to include a broader spectrum of gender identities to obtain a more inclusive understanding of the impact of pornography consumption on psychological well-being.

Suggestions for Future Research

1. **Longitudinal Studies**: To better understand the long-term effects of pornography consumption, future research should track changes in aggression, depression, and executive functioning over time.
2. **Experimental Designs**: Experimental studies could establish causal relationships by manipulating exposure to pornography and measuring immediate and short-term effects on psychological outcomes.
3. **Increased Sample Diversity**: Expanding the sample to include individuals from different demographic backgrounds, including age, cultural affiliation, and sexual orientation, will help generalize the findings to broader populations.
4. **Qualitative Research**: Qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups could provide deeper insights into individuals' attitudes, motivations, and behaviors related to pornography consumption.
5. **Mediation and Moderation Analyses**: Exploring mediators and moderators such as social norms and coping strategies can uncover mechanisms that influence how pornography consumption affects psychological outcomes.
6. **Interventions**: Developing targeted interventions, such as educational programs or therapeutic strategies, could help mitigate the negative psychological effects of pornography consumption.

Conclusion

This study contributes valuable insights into the psychological impact of pornography consumption, revealing significant gender differences in **Depression** and **Executive Functioning** but no significant difference in **Aggression**. These findings emphasize the need for gender-sensitive interventions and further research to explore the long-term, causal, and moderated effects of pornography on mental health outcomes. By continuing to explore the complex relationship between pornography and psychological well-being, researchers can help develop informed strategies to address the potential harms of pornography consumption on individuals' mental health.

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